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EDITORIAL

Development of reading skills ought to be considered the most important function of any educational institution and realizing its importance, special attention is paid to this aspect in western countries where specialists like reading instructors are appointed. Further they also administer various types of standardized tests to collect information about the student's reading ability and intelligence. The first article in this issue is taken from *The Reading Teacher* which will make it clear how seriously this problem is considered in its different aspects so as to find means to cater to the individual needs of each child. We are now ushering in a new pattern of education and in the shortened ten year course we must take special efforts to achieve greater results in promoting reading interests and skills.

Prof: B. Ardhanareeswaran has given us a brief but clear description of an experiment in team teaching which he and his colleagues in the Guru Nanak College tried out a couple of years ago. Gone are the days past recall when the English Lecturer could step into his classroom and deliver an hour-long peroration and feel a sense of satisfaction that he had delivered the goods. Teaching techniques which are commonly looked down upon as simple devices suited to only secondary stage of education have become equally indispensable to the professors of colleges and universities, if they are truly conscientious in discharging their duties and responsibilities.

In Syllabus Planning, Dr. S. C. Bhatia has rightly emphasized the need for making provision for the teaching of listening and speaking skills. He has also stressed the importance of sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic aspects. His four recommendations to the workshop at which his paper was presented are worthy of consideration by the framers of English Syllabus in other places as well.

Very often there is an erroneous impression that the study of literature may be adversely affected by the growing importance of linguistics. Virginia F. Allen has disproved it by describing the healthy influence of linguistics on literature, As she says "The teacher of literature has much to gain from an objective study of language. If human experience is the *What* of literature, surely language is part of the *How*."

Prof. R. Sudarsanam has made valuable contributions to our Journal by giving complete acccunts of the innovations carried out by him in his university. An overall report of what he planned and achieved finds a place in this issue. There is surely a pressing need for similar projects to be undertaken in other professional colleges.

ASSESSING INFORMATION ABOUT INTELLIGENCE AND READING

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MOST DISCUSSIONS of the evaluation of reading disability suggest that an intelligence test be administered as part of the diagnosis process. Yet, in practice, intelligence and reading are all too frequently dealt with as unrelated concepts. Reading instruction is seen as the responsibility of the teacher: intelligence and its evaluation are the realm of the psychologist. Teachers are often poorly prepared to interpret the implications that the results of an intelligence test have for understanding a reading problem. Often they feel that the intelligence test results are unfair or misleading, yet they are involved with the concept.

For example, they passively accept conclusions drawn by a psychologist without asking careful, critical questions. The major purpose of this paper is to review some of the questions teachers need to ask in order to professionally assess the implications that the resuls of an intelligence test have for reading instruction.

A prerequisite for asking critical questions is, as in any area of study, some fundamental background information. In this respect, teachers must know reasonably well the instrument or instruments that are used to measure intelligence. Over fifty years ago, Boring (1923) wrote "intelligence as a measurable capacity must at the start be defined as the capacity to do well on an intelli-

From

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gence test." This operational definition goes beyond tautology, for a teacher's assessment of information about intelligence will remain very incomplete if he is not familiar with the measurement instrument. Yet, it is not at all unusual to find a teacher who has been receiving such information for twenty or thirty years, but who has no idea about the composition of the intelligence test. Such teachers, if given illustrative items from an intelligence test, are often horrified at the extent to which test items are dependent upon achievement, background of experience or language abilities. The attitude of some school psychologists has undoubtedly contributed to teacher ignorance in this area. For example, one school psychology text says. "It is not necessary for teachers to be intimately familiar with the tests that the psychologist uses. It is part of his expertness to select and interpret data and to communicate results in a manner useful to teachers" (Eiserer, 1963). It is both cumbersome and inefficient for a psychologist to communicate the results of an intelligence test, if the teacher does not know the measurement instrument. In addition, a teacher who is unfamiliar with the test is totally reliant on the psychologist for conclusions drawn and interpretations made This places teachers in an inferior, dependent position from which they cannot challenge conclusions or offer alternate explanations or interpretations. It is the position of this author that the results of formal measures of intelligence should not be made available to teachers unless they are familiar with the content, strengths and weaknesses of the assessment instruments being used.

Another consideration follows naturally from the above. Before attempting to assess information about intelligence as it relates to reading, the teacher should be able to apply some general evaluation criteria to the intelligence test that was used. Is it reliable? Is it valid? Was the standardization procedure appropriate? Texts such as Cronbach (1960), Freeman (1962) and Nunnally (1972) provide helpful guidelines in this regard. The reviews published in the Mental Measurements Yearbooks can help answer some of these general considerations, and hopefully the psychologist who administered the test will be able and willing to provide answers to these questions as teachers pose them.

Since these general criterion considerations are dealt with in many sources, they will not be reviewed here, in order to allow for a more focused discussion of the specific topic. Their importance should not, however, be under-estimated.

Important questions

Once the above preliminary considerations have been made, the teacher or reading specialist is in a position to begin critically posing questions. One of the first things that needs to be asked is: *Was an appropriate instrument used to measure intelligence as it relates to reading?* Not all intelligence tests measure the same skills. There is widespread agreement that there is a highly significant relationship between intelligence and reading achievement; however, beyond this general conclusion, the relationship depends on the nature of the instruments used to measure reading and intelligence as well as the stage of development that the child has reached in the process of learning to read. For example, there is good agreement that the correlation between the two areas is greater in groups of older as compared with younger children (Farr, 1969; Harris, 1970). Summarising the results of several studies, Harris (1970) reports the correlations are generally in the .40s and .50s in first grade, rise to the .70s by fourth grade and tend to remain about .70 for group verbal tests into the freshman year of college. Although there are a number of possible explanations, one that seems quite plausible suggests that in most cases measures of intelligence and reading become more similar beyond the earliest grade levels; both become increasingly dependent upon verbal and reading comprehension skills. For example, at first grade the perceptual and spatial subtests from the Thurstone Primary Abilities Test correlate best with reading, but in seventh grade the verbal meaning subtest correlates best (Reed, 1958).

For some testing purposes, gross misinterpretations could result if the intelligence test is reading-dependent. For example, the conclusion is sometimes drawn that although a child is reading well below a level appropriate for someone his age, he is in fact reading up to his "capacity" as determined by intelligence test scores. Because he's "doing as well as can be expected," much-

needed changes in his educational programme may never be considered. If the test is being used to try to better understand the child's potential for learning or the probability of his being intellectually capable of profiting from special help in reading, a reading-dependent intelligence test would be totally inappropriate.

Another general principle that seems reasonable in this area is that group measures might be used as preliminary screening devices or to draw conclusions about a group of students; however if conclusions are to be used to make decisions about individuals an individually administered intelligence and reading test are usually a necessary, though not sufficient, prerequisite for reliables and valid information. Studies by Durrell (1933) and Fitzgerald (1960) provide important data related to this caution.

Another important question might be: *Have the results been significantly distorted because of some special, identifiable limitations on the part of the child?* On the surface the results of an evaluation might suggest low intelligence, but in reality the presence of sensory, motor, orthopedic, neurological or psychological problems may invalidate the results of the intelligence test.

An illustration

Citing clinical cases is somewhat dangerous, but the following is cited, not as proof, but in order to illustrate. A deaf child was recently tested so as to "determine the extent of mental retardation." The child, ten years old, had been given a Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test five years ago and the resultant IQ was fifty-five. It appears that most of the teachers who worked with this boy felt that his potential for reading and other learning activities as well, was essentially nonexistent. An evaluation performed two months ago resulted in a WISC-Performance IQ of 109. The boy was alert, spontaneous, and able to meet the demands of this intelligence test easily. Although the Stanford-Binet might have yielded some useful information, reporting an IQ was inappropriate and any interpretation should have first considered the fact of the child's serious hearing loss.

Less severe limitations will have less dramatic effects, but the effect will probably be there. Teachers must continuously ask if the appropriate measurement instruments were used in light of special limitations that the child has and if these limitations were considered when the results were interpreted.

Similarly, teachers need to ask: *How do factors such as motivation, personality, sociability, attitudes, value system, cultural background and the like influence intelligence test performance?* Zimmerman and Silverman (1967) warn of the dangers in this area and cite a study by Garfield and Afflict (1960) of individuals who had been institutionalized as mentally defective, only to be released as within normal limits at a later date. They maintain that "A review of the original testing indicated repeated evidence of disturbance that limited the child's ability to perform adequately on test material. For example, negativeness, peculiarity, or other usual behavior was frequently reported, yet the influence of this on the test performance had been ignored." There are two considerations. First, if the available information is in the form of a report or conclusions, are factors such as rapport, motivation, attitude and so on discussed as possible influencing factors? Second, if you are evaluating the meaning of test scores, then it is important to ask if there are assumptions made by the test that are not met in the case of this child because of characteristics he possesses.

A rather simple criterion is: *How recently was the available information about intelligence and reading gathered?* Group reading test scores are frequently fairly up-to-date. Unfortunately, conclusion are sometimes drawn on the basis of outdated information about intelligence. In the case of the deaf child cited earlier, educational decisions and teacher judgment were guided by information that was five years old. Earlier re-evaluation might have avoided the perpetuation of inaccurate bases for educational planning.

Another important question is: *How broad is the basis for the available information?* One hallmark of a good psychological or educational report is that it goes beyond the test scores and reports specific responses and reactions of the child during the

evaluation. Test scores are then considered in the context of the child's total behaviour during the testing. However, there is also the obligation to consider both scores and behavior during the evaluation in the context of the child's day-to-day behavior. The mysticism of testing, the awe for the unknown, frequently leads to teachers placing far more credance in a test score than they do in consistent, observable behavior. About ten years ago, McDonald (1964) reported that he felt there was an encouraging sign wherein teachers were willing to leave "the safe, familiar level of objective tests" and to undertake the challenge of "making tentative assessments involving observation and study of the background, nature of thought processes, personality structure and other attributes acquired in the course of living." Although there is effort by practitioners in this direction, there is still an over-reliance on "objective" test scores. There are at least three related questions here: How broadly based is the information about intelligence and reading? Are test scores considered within the context of the behaviour during the testing? Is test performance considered within the context of the child's day-to-day behaviour? Test data that do not coincide with the consistent behavior of the child need to be assessed especially carefully.

In a recent article in the *Journal of School Psychology* Barbara Keogh (1972) states that "Many school psychologists' reports are chronicles of disaster." When the information about a child's intelligence and reading is in the form of a report, an important criterion question is: *Are skills and strengths listed and discussed in addition to deficits and weaknesses?* If the information is to be used in any meaningful way, the person responsible for the educational program of that child should capitalize upon the cognitive and intellectual strengths that he brings with him. There is a need to withdraw from the disaster-orientation of psychological as well as educational reports.

The final two criteria are probably the most important. *First, to what extent does the information about intelligence and reading contribute to our understanding of either of them?* As noted earlier, there is a substantial correlation between the two. We have perhaps been too quick to assume that the problems in read-

ing are the result of problems in intelligence. While it may be true, it is also possible that the poor reading performance can help explain the poor performance in intelligence. At a very obvious level, if the intelligence test is reading dependent, then quite probably the reading is responsible for the poor performance in intelligence. At a more clinical level, consider the finding that children with reading problems frequently do poorly in the information subtest of the WISC. The interpretation is frequently made that the sparse background of information has been a major contributor to the reading problem, yet it is possible that the information called for by this subtest is usually acquired through reading, so that the child with a reading problem will not be able to meet its demands.

The crucial issue is, of course : *How does the information about intelligence contribute to the goal of teaching children to read?* This is indeed the sine qua non. If all former criteria are fulfilled and this one is not, the information is useless. Does or does not the information lead to recommendations that result in improved performance on the part of the child?

WISC scores

One of the favourite research areas with regard to the relationship between reading and intelligence centers about the configuration of WISC subtest scores in a population of disabled readers. Farr (1969) and Huelsman (1970), in reviewing studies which have looked at the co-relationship of these two variables, note that there are indeed fairly consistent patterns of WISC scores for disabled readers; however, only three studies suggested that WISC subtest patterns could be employed to determine the type of remedial reading program needed, and not one study was directed at trying to validate this suggestion. Farr concludes, "The subtest patterns of the WISC have been shown to be related to retardation. What is now needed are studies which attempt to relate this test performance to instructional programs in order to investigate the validity of these scores for planning effective remediation...... While correlations between poor reading and performance on these

(psychological) tests have been found, the reasons for them have never been determined. Unless researchers began to validate these correlations against remedial programs or some other valid criterion, attempts to use psychological tests as diagnostic reading tests should be abandoned."

Discussions in textbooks dealing with the diagnosis and correction of reading disability also address very little attention to the question of how to use information about intelligence in improving reading performance. Far greater emphasis is often placed upon using the mental age of the child as the means by which existence or extent of reading retardation is determined. This activity is sometimes useful—it can help us understand an educational situation better. For example, a group of teachers working with a thirteen year old girl were quite upset because she was not apparently making progress in reading. The results of an intelligence test done six years ago indicated a Performance IQ score of 96. When the child was re-examined, the results on the WISC were: A Verbal IQ score of 71 and a Performance IQ score of 76 The score from a Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test was 56. The reading grade score from the Wide Range Achievement Test was 4.2. Reading comprehension scores were quite deficient at all levels of an informal reading inventory. Perceptual, vocabulary and cognitive development as demonstrated in the evaluation were quite restricted and coincided with day-to-day teacher observations.

The new information about her intelligence did not suggest that teachers should "give up" in trying to teach the child to read. It did, however, suggest that before reading instruction could be successful, greater background of experience and vocabulary development would probably be necessary.

In the case just cited, the results of the intelligence test did lead to educational changes and somewhat better progress in reading on the part of the child. It is unlikely that it would have occurred if the evaluation had ended with the calculation of her reading expectancy.

Incidentally, there is a very false precision frequently implied by such calculations. For the case cited above based only on mental age and score on the Wide Range, she is approximately two months retarded is reading. However, if the formula suggested by Harris (1970) were used, she would be approximately a year and a half behind in reading, while according to the formula suggested by Bond and Tinker (1957), she is three years behind. Naturally, if we substitute the results of the informal inventory for the results of the Wide Range, three new estimates of extent of retardation result.

Calculations of grade expectancy and extent of retardation may be somewhat interesting, occasionally helpful, but they are frequently irrelevant and sometimes detrimental. Rather than asking about the years of retardation, teachers need to relate intelligence test results to reading in ways that have implications for overcoming the problem. Important specific questions might include: Are there specific techniques for successfully teaching reading to children with IQ scores of less than 60? Are there strategies that should be used for children who score well on verbal but poorly on performance measures of intelligence? If a child does poorly on vocabulary measures of intelligence, does this affect the sequence, in which reading materials are introduced? At present, there is very little evidence to suggest that the remediation of reading problems is hastened because of implications drawn from intelligence tests. In some practical situations, the IQ score is simply used as a justification for a low level of performance. If this continues to be the case, there is little justification in the administration of these measures.

As critical questions are posed, commonly held views about the implications of intelligence tests for reading may be challenged. For example, it was often assumed that children with low IQ scores would not profit from remedial reading instruction. Studies by Frost (1963) and Chansky (1963) have seriously challenged this assumption and suggest that some of the children who profited most from remediation activities would have been excluded from such programs on the basis of IQ scores.

Critical questions like those listed above must be asked if the results of intelligence tests are to be used to help children achieve in reading.

AN EXPERIMENT IN TEAM TEACHING

Prof. B. ARDHANAREESWARAN

I would like to share with readers of the Journal of English Language Teaching an experiment in team teaching in which I participated at Guru Nanak College, Madras, in the academic year 1972-73. We chose one section of the "pre-university" class for the experiment. Three members of the department of English carried out the experiment, for which I served as director-co-ordinator as well as one of the instructors.

The three instructors shared in the teaching of a one-hour unit based on a literary passage; one instructor dealt with the lexical items, the second explained the meaning of the passage, and the third helped the students with grammar exercises based on the passage.

In teaching a 24-line poem, one member of the team read the poem once or twice and gave the gist of it to the class: another had the students read the first stanza silently two or three times and, after giving them sufficient time, asked questions to discover how much they had grasped, and developed with them an understanding of the stanza; the third member asked the students comprehension questions and helped them further to appreciate the stanza. The next time we had a poetry hour, one member of the team reviewed the first stanza by asking questions of the class, then the other two members discussed the second stanza. If there was time, we discussed the third stanza, too; otherwise we put it off until the

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next poetry hour. In that hour, after finishing the poem, we consolidated points and ideas in the poem that we thought were worthy of spec ial note.

In a class hour devoted to a less-detailed study of a literary passage we proceeded somewhat as follows: If the class was to study a chapter of about four pages, one member of the team reviewed the previous chapter by asking questions of students; another member gave the class the gist of the chapter to be read: the third member gave the class sufficient time to go through the chapter (silently) after which he suggested a few sentences for close study and then checked the students' comprehension of the story by asking them questions about it.

Our experiment in team teaching made a strong impression on the new teachers who observed it. They expressed great interest and said that they had gained from it valuable insight into teaching. They stated, furthermore, that they had made up their minds to give up the usual method of lecturing for the entire class hour. Also, some students in the experimental class told me that they found the class far more interesting when taught by a team.

While encouraged by these positive results, I feel that we should conduct such experiments for longer periods and on a wider scale in order to obtain more comprehensive results and draw more definite conclusion.

SYLLABUS PLANNING

By Dr. S.C. BHATIA

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I propose to discuss the idea of a "workable" syllabus in the context of two approaches: an approach to syllabus planning motivated by advances in English Language Teaching (ELT) technology: and, an approach influenced by practical experience in the teaching of English at both the undergraduate and the post-graduate levels. I call it a "workable" syllabus, for, I believe that a syllabus planned in terms of the expertise gained from ELT technology has often been incomplete and obscure. At the same time, a considerable amount of language learning has taken place despite all ambiguities in the various syllabii, I would like to suggest that the success of a syllabus is largely incumbent upon a proper understanding of two factors ;

(i) the motivation of the learner; and

(ii) the role of the teacher.

With the given state of syllabus planning, we have helped one generation of learners in independent India to acquire control of various language skills. There has been a tremendous quantitative expansion, in terms of learners and teachers. To add to this quantitative expansion, advance in ELT technology have not filtered down to their actual users, the teacher in the class room. We may continue to make use of sophisticated technology (hard-ware and software) in the planning of our syllabii and yet not achieve much.

Paper presented at the UGC Sponsored Workshop on Syllabus Planning In and Teaching of English Language and Literature at B. N. Chakaravarty University, Kuruk-shetra, September 28-30, 1976.

While the number of the learners and the teachers has been steadily increasing, language (as far as the student is concerned) has been steadily declining. Excepting an hour or two of daily work in an institutional framework, most of our students rarely find chances of social contact through the medium of the English language. With a large number of universities now initiating, the use of regional languages as mediums of instruction, student's contact with the language has declined even in the institutional framework.

However, recent pronouncements by various State Governments favouring a compulsory introduction of the English language from the school stage have generated fresh hopes of added incentives to learn English. It is quite likely that the inclusion of education in the concurrent list of our constitution will result in an increasing emphasis on the teaching of English as an additional link language for the nation. The responsibilities of the profession have assumed a new dimension; and those call for serious thinking on the subject.

What is a syllabus? What is its shape at the undergraduate stage? Pit Corder (1973) states:

"A finished syllabus is the overall plan for the learning process. It, too, must specify what components, or learning items, must be available, or learned by a certain time, what is the most efficient sequence in which they are learned; what items can be learned simultaneously; what items are available from stock, i.e, already known; and the whole process is determined by considerations of how long it takes to produce or learn, a component, or item. The process is under continual scrutiny by means of stock checks, or tests and examinations." (p.296).

The learning process, as reflected in the syllabus, centres on the learner. His needs can be described and met by looking at aspects such as linguistic (sounds, lexis, grammar and discourse)

sociolinguistic (areas and manner of language use) and, psycholinguistic (the language skills).

The syllabus planner should seek answers to the following questions:

What is the learner's motivation ?

What areas of language are going to be needed by the learner?

How best can the syllabus help him to achieve the above?

I need not go into the details of motivational factors pertinent to our situation. It should suffice to state that most learners learn English.

to fulfil the degree requirements; and to be able to get a job

There can be other reasons as well; however, those will not apply to a large majority of learners. The 'areas' of language use (domain, in sociolinguistics) can be analysed in utilitarian terms. The learner may use English in his official work or for pleasurable reading and writing. (The working paper prepared by the CIEFL has a good analysis on this subject). It is commonly (though erroneously) assumed in India that of the four language skills, reading and writing are of crucial significance to the learner. In most of our syllabii, we find no provision for the teaching of listening and speaking. I would like to emphasize here that listening as a language skill must find an important place in our syllabii. I hope this workshop will devete a session to the teaching of this skill in our colleges and universities.

Assuming these considerations as his bases, the ELT technologist or the syllabus planner prepares a list of various items (often sentence structures) and instances of connected discourse in the form of essays, short-stories, plays and selections from poetry. These items or structures are largely selected from pedagogic des-

criptions of language. These are listed in a manner that encourages the class room teacher to teach them as discrete points, these and, most often, at the sentence level. Our syllabii have not yet taken into account units beyond the sentence level. The learners may do well in tests *aiming at evaluation of discrete points* of grammer yet they may not achieve much when asked to write a connects paragraph or an entire essayt

Similarly, the syllabii do not lay much emphasis on reading. as a skill. The teacher talks and the students 'listen' (hopefully). Comprehension questions based on the text have not yet become a subject of critical understanding. Whatever questions a textbook writer has included in the book are conveniently used in the class room. The helpbook writer simplifies the learning task for the learner by providing readymade answers. The learner's attempt, in this context, cannot certainly be described as one of comprehension; it is merely an act of reproduction. What is required here is an ability to prepare class room questions in an intelligent manner.

I believe that writing becomes a *primary* skill in our teaching acquisition of the other three skills is merely coincidental. The syllabus lists items in terms of the basic features of the sentence structure, their utility to the learner, how different these are from the learner's first language, and, their level of difficulty. A large number of teachers resist the idea of teaching grammar (or 'language' as they choose to call it) and if departmental adjustment can be made, they would-prefer to teach some literary textbook. One need not take this as criticism, for the teachers' orientation and training helps them to prefer this assignment. Even when forced to teach grammar independent of or based on the textbook, teaching becomes a discrete-point task. "Language learning becomes a cumulative process, not an integrative one."

Research evidence has not sufficiently indicated that a mere ability to manipulate structures will automatically enable a learner to achieve a higher level of organization in his language, i.e' organization of paragraphs. Drills will not, however meaningful.

In our present attempts at combining language and literature (or teaching language through literature), we have sought to tackle merely the sentence level of writing and comprehension. Consequently, a necessary part of such a syllabus is the remedial programme. The remedial programmes again lay more emphasis on the control of grammar.

It must be acknowledged that textbooks published in the last few years have taken note of the sociolinguistic aspects of language use. The content element of the syllabus recognizes realistic situations of language use. Earlier text books multiplied the degree of difficulty of two levels: language and content. An element of Indianness or universality is now reflected in many textbooks.

A workable syllabus assumes an active participation by the teachers. Ways and means must be found to keep teachers posted with significant applications of ELT technology in the classroom. It means assumption of leadership by the university departments and at the same time it means a lot more work by the teacher both in and out of the classroom. A concept of a teacher-researcher must develop alongside the work of research scholars. Syllabii planned by exports are often found inappropriate or irrelevant by the departments concerned: for the experts may not appreciate the incidence of harsh realities of the classroom and the minimum needs of the learners. If a syllabus fails to achieve its planned objectives, the failure can be attributed largely to the lack of foresight on the part of the syllabus planner. The syllabus planner has failed to visualize the needs and capabilities of the classroom teacher. I would like to suggest, for purposes of discussion in this Workshop, the following points :

1. A group of teachers should draw a list of linguistic items (sentence structures, lexis, and, paragraph organising elements) ;

2. Another group of teachers should prepare a list of experiences or situations where • learners are likely to use the language;

3. A third group of teachers should analyse the teaching o various language skills and how they should find a place in the syllabus.

These three groups should then co-ordinate their work and prepare teaching materials.

4. The teacher should be recognised as one of the crucial factors in the learning process. Each university department should undertake the responsibility of providing in-service training to its teachers. The training should relate to the needs of the teacher in the context of the adopted syllabus.

It is quite likely that a group of ELT specialists may do this background work faster and economically. The ELT specialists will not be able to "sell" it to teachers, for the only way to give it to the teachers is to tell them why it is necessary and how it is drawn.

1. *Pit Corder, S; Introducing Applied Linguistics Penguin Books, 1973.*

Some Insights from Linguistics for the Teaching of Literature

VIRGINIA F. ALLEN
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Years ago, while I was working toward a Master's degree in literature and creative writing at a certain large university, there was a campus rumor that was never verified, but I suspect it was virtually true. It was rumored that the English Department maintained a file labeled "Saving the Humanities." The file was said to deal with strategies for defending literature against the onslaught of linguistics. who were bent on desecrating our English literary heritage.

Perhaps there has been a change since those days. It may be that literature no longer feels threatened by linguistics. It may even be that the two fields of study are now seen, on both sides, to be complementary disciplines, not competing ones. I hope so. Yet there is not much evidence to support that hope. When English teaching graduate students join me at registration time to plan programs leading to the Master's degree, there is still a noticeable shying away from linguistics courses, especially among teachers expressing a particular fondness for literature. This happens whether the teacher is in TESOL or working with native speakers of English. Among teachers generally, what linguistics can contribute to literary studies is not widely known. It seems worthwhile, then, to identify insights derived from an objective study of language which, in my experience, have enhanced the study and teaching of literature.

* From English Teaching Forum Oct. 1976

Writing related to speech

The first insights emerged from the linguistics of the 1940s and '50s. From the courses of that era. dealing with the work of linguists like Bloomfield, Fries, and Sapir, came the revelation that *writing is a representation of speech.* This might seem too self-evident to be called a revelation; yet if I had ever seriously viewed writing as a representation of speech, I had overlooked some important implications.

As a fledgling poet-cum-literary scholar, many of my years had gone into the study of writing, but I had no systematic knowledge at all of speech. Or of aspects of spoken English which cannot be represented by our writing system. Or of specific correspondences between speech sounds in various dialects and their written representations. Thus, throughout a dozen youthful readings of *Little Women*, I had puzzled over the heroines'name for their mother which the author spelled *Marmee.* With the dawn of linguistic awareness came the realization that *Marmee* in r-less Boston would sound like "Mommy" where I lived; Bostonian author Louisa Alcot was using the orthography available for symbolizing her family's mode of talk.

This is only one trivial implication of the concept of writing as representation of speech—the *writer's* speech, unless otherwise indicated. The more I learned about speech in contrast to writing, the deeper grew my appreciation of the task facing writers. who must make do with a paltry few conventional graphemes (letters and punctuation marks) for creating the semblance of speech. The linguistics of the forties and fifties helped many of us perceive hitherto unnoticed aspects of the speech that writers present to the eye.

It was in linguistics courses that many of us first took note of the rich array of communication signals used in spoken language; the respective roles of voice volume, stress, pitch, pauses, and the interplay among all these. How to choose and arrange words in a passage so as to evoke in a reader's mental ear the rhythms and emphasis appropriate to the writer's intention—that is one of the

central problems in literary art. Perhaps this task would not be made easier for literary artist by acquaintance with the work of Pike, Trager, and Smith; but the observations of those and other linguists concerning intonation, stress, and juncture are helpful to teachers. They offer ways of accounting for the effects produced by literary craftsmanship.

Content words, function words, and rhythm

Another helpful way of looking at language grew out of early contacts with linguistics. In the forties and fifties, one learned that—for the linguists of that period-there were basically two kinds of words: *content words* and *function words*. To the student of language at that time, the distinction between content words and function words was as vital as the difference between stringed instruments and wind instruments is to the student of music.

This way of categorizing words appears not to be universally familiar to English teachers, so a brief explanation may be in order. *Content words* are words that have intrinsic or lexical meaning of their own; many of them change their forms to signal grammatical notions like plurality or past tense or superlative degree. Nouns and verbs are content words; so are adjectives and adverbs. Such words have a relatively high degree of semantic content, as well as, in most cases, being capable of undergoing form changes; dictionaries provide fairly satisfactory definitions of content words.

Function words, on the other hand, are used chiefly to perform the function of relating content words to other content words within the sentence. They include prepositions, conjunctions, articles, pronouns, and auxiliaries. In contrast to content words, function words have relatively little semantic content; dictionaries are seldom helpful in defining them.

Why the impact of this concept upon an English teacher who had formerly viewed the word stock of English as divisible into eight parts of speech? And what is its bearing upon literature?

To find significance in the distinction between content words and function words, one must again call to mind the axiom that writing is a representation of speech. In speech, function words are less likely than content words to be said loudly, to carry emphasis or stress. When, for example, the sentence *I stand at the door* is spoken, the pronoun, preposition, and article would normally be said more softly and more quickly than the verb *stand* and the noun *door*. The result is this kind of rhythm:

On the other hand, phrase consisting solely of content words such as *cold gray stones*, would produce this effect.

Thus 'the patterning of syllables carrying different degrees of stress in the spoken language can account for the rhythm of a written passage—whether in poetry or in prose. There is a direct relationship between the rhythm or cadence of a passage and the placement of articles, prepositions, auxiliaries, and other function words. All this has a great deal to do with literary craftsmanship. and with discussions of it in literature classes. More explicitly, it helps explain why one phrasing of an idea may be more satisfying to the reader than some other apparently optional phrasing, Consider, for example, the effect produced by the harmonious inter action of syntax, intonation, and meaning in this periodic sentence from the King James Bible:

Underneath are the everlasting arms.

Try rearranging the same words:

The everlasting arms are underneath.

Notice how much is lost by that shift in position of two words. Consider, too, Emily Dickinson's lines:

Parting is all we know of Heaven

And all we need of Hell.

If we were to replace *Parting* with the lexically equivalent infinitive form *To part*, we would reverse the order of stressed and unstressed syllables. This reversal would remove the pause which is almost obligatory after *Parting*, and give the line a sing-song lilt:

To part is all we know of Heaven.

Gone is the sense of trauma, drama, and awe.

Much more could be said about linguistic insights that clarify perceptions and assements of literary craftsmanship. But only the most advanced students in TESOL are ready to analyze the dynamics of literature. For the rest, there is a far more modest goal: basic comprehension. How might an objective view of language help the teacher help students understand what they read?

Basic comprehension problems

Here again linguistics in the forties and fifties offered useful insights. To understand why many literary passages baffle students, teachers need to know how the conventions of print obscure meanings that would be made clear in speech. When we talk, we use voice volume to call attention to salient points, and we use pauses of varying lengths to create stopping places between certain sentence parts. In print, there is often nothing visible within a sentence to suggest emphases or breaks between syntactic units. The letters are all of uniform size, whether or not the words they spell would be stressed in speech. The spaces between major sentence parts are no longer than the spaces between words within a phrase.

Take for example the following sentence from Emerson's essay on Love:

What do we wish to know of any worthy person so much as how he has sped in the history of this sentiment?

If spoken aloud, the sentence would sound like this:

What do we WISH to KNOW of ANY WORTHY PERSON so much as HOW he has SPED in the HISTORY of THIS SENTIMENT?

When a teacher is aware of key differences between speech and its written representation, steps can be taken to minimize the resulting difficulties. Sometimes, when a sentence provides the key to the meaning of an entire passage, the teacher may wish to copy it on the chalkboard in such a form as to suggest pauses and stresses that would have been supplied in speech. Or the teacher may read the sentence aloud, asking the students to note in their text which ones are separated by pauses. Or the teacher may give the students a passage printed in conventional form and ask them to recopy it, spacing it out into word groups corresponding to units of syntax and meaning.

Whatever strategy is used for dealing with problems that arise out of the inadequacy of the writing system for supplying cues absent from print but present in speech, the main point is this: the English teacher who knows how speech operates is in a position to help students overcome obstacles to understanding what they read.

Other obstacles to comprehension

Insights into other potential obstacles to comprehension occurring in literature have come to ESL teachers through an objective study of the English language. One such obstacle arises out of the tendency of English writers (and speakers) to employ what linguists have called *functional shift*. Through the operation of functional shift, a word that students first learned as a noun may in some contexts function as an adjective or a verb. Indeed, in certain contexts a word learned as an auxiliary may be made to play the role of noun, as in these lines from W.R Rodgers' "Neither Here Nor There":

In that land all Is and nothing's Ought;

No owners or notices, only birds......

When the teacher has been made aware of the frequency with which words generally associated with one "part of speech" can be pressed into service for other roles, he can predict and prevent blocks to comprehension among his students.

From an objective study of language, too, teachers may gain a clearer sense of what constitutes the normal. customary word order characterising English communication in everyday life. This is a word order from which literature often departs. When deviations from the usual word order are readily perceived by the teacher the students can be guided through comprehension problems.

Problems resulting from word order are often found in poetry, as in these lines by T.S. Eliot:

Between the conception
And the creation
Between the emotion
And the response
Falls the shadow

Such problems are not confined to poetry, however; they are also met in prose. This sentence from Steinbeck's story *The Red Pony* is one of countless examples:

One fat white cloud he helped clear to the mountain rims and pressed it firmly over, out of sight.

For many teachers, then. a major contribution of linguistics during earlier decades was the light it shed on language as it is actually used in everyday non-literary communication, and on the way language *sounds*. Since the education of English teachers had otherwise dealt almost exclusively with the writing system apart from ordinary spoken language. we needed that focus on formerly unnoticed features of speech,

In more recent times, the focus has shifted. Many grammarians and linguists are now directing attention to other concerns. The language courses of the 1960s and 1970s have made their own contributions to the work of class room teachers. Many of today's language scholars are studying ambiguity, for instance, and synonymity, and various ways of paraphrasing an underlying idea. All of these concerns are of interest to teachers of literature.

Deletion and recoverability

For those of us who need fresh approaches to problems o- comprehension in the reading of literary works, there is a partif cularly promising area being developed by linguistics today. This deals with the concepts of *deletion* and *recoverability*. It is postulated that in some cases a sentence may be a shortened form of a longer sentence from which certain elements are said to have been deleted. To understand such a sentence, the deleted elements must be recovered. A simple example might be the following:

Cats are domestic animals, and dogs are, too.

This could be derived from the longer sentence:

Cats are domestic animals, and dogs are domestic animals, too.

Acquaintance with the possibility of deletion and recoverability can prove useful when a class is studying extended discourse. Here is an example :

> Among the people whom Columbus knew, it was believed that the world was flat. The ocean was infested with terrifying monsters, which often devoured ships.

For an accurate reading of the second sentence of this text, it is necessary to "recover" the ideas conveyed by the initial ten words of the first sentence. The writer does not mean to say that the ocean actually was infested with terrifying monsters, but that *Among the people whom Columbus knew, it was believed that* this was true.

Avoiding rhetorical traps

Whether or not one chooses to accept the notion that the second sentence has in fact undergone a process of deletion, the concept of deleted elements is helpful. It alerts teachers and students to problems inherent in reading certain kinds of passages —passages in which certain sentences do not express the writer's own beliefs (or the beliefs he wishes the reader to adopt) even though they seem to do so, If readers are not aware of this difference between intention and apparent meaning, a whole series of sentences may be misread as assertions of fact, when the writer had precisely the opposite purpose in mind.

That is what happened when forty readers were given the following passage to interpret from an essay on language and cognition, by Brown and Lenneberg.

> It is popularly believed that reality is present in much the same form to all men of sound mind. There are objects like a house or a cat and qualities like red or wet and events like eating or singing and relationships like near to and between. Languages are itemized inventories of this reality. They differ, of course, in the sounds they employ, but the inventory is always the same.

Having read this passage, the forty readers were asked :

1. *Does this writer seem to believe* that reality is present in much the same form to all men of sound mind?

2. *According to this writer, is it true* that languages are itemized inventories of reality?

3. *Does this writer seem to want the reader to believe* that the inventory of reality is the same for all languages?

Surprisingly, almost eighty per cent of the forty readers answered. Yes to the above questions. They had failed to carry for-

ward from the sentence introducing the paragraph the crucial clause *It is popularly believed*, and so missed the ironic intent of the sentences that followed. Apparently, but erroneously, the writers had expected their readers to attribute the second and third statements to naive members of the public, whose misconceptions would shortly be refuted. This of course is common practice in English exposition: the writer starts by setting forth commonly held assumptions and then proceeds to demonstrate how wrong they are.

The many readers who misinterpreted the above passage were native speakers of English. How slim, then, would be the chances of comprehension among students of English as a second language. For them, particularly, it is important to demonstrate that there may be an unseen "deleted" sentence part to be "recovered" and then placed before a statement; the sentence ought not to be accepted as a statement of fact.

What often happens in an essay is that the writer speaks first in his own person to establish the viewpoint he plans to defend. Then, frequently without explicit warning, he gives readers the words of some other, invisible, person who represents a viewpoint quite different from his own. It is up to the reader to discern that a straw man has been set up to express views which the writer is about to discredit. There is surely a threat to reading comprehension in this kind of rhetorical ventriloquism.

In classes where sophisticated materials are being read, teachers need to watch vigilantly for such rhetorical traps. And students should be trained to "recover" the "deleted" elements that will put statements into proper perspective.

Understanding the writer's reasoning processes

As Kottmeyer points out, "Achieving the kind of comprehension which is involved in securing and retaining vicarious experience by imaginative identification with the writer or with his fictional characters is crucial to the effective use of literature in

schools." 3. True, but this statement applies not only to fiction but to exposition as well. When expository prose is being read, students need to achieve "imaginative identification" with the writer's *reasoning processes*. How can this be done?

One way is to train students to ask themselves: Is there some thing the writer has said in an earlier part of this passage that should be remembered and repeated along with the sentences coming after it? What idea does he assume I am carrying along in my mind?

This is a reading habit to be developed through work on increasingly complex passages, starting with obvious uses of rhetorical ventriloquism, as found in the following:

> Some children think that darkness is very frightening.
> There are ghosts in the corners of every darkened room.
> Every noise is the footstep of a hostile stranger.

In discussing such a passage, the students learn to note the possibility of restoring to certain sentences various elements present in the underlying deep structure but absent from the surface form. By working through a series of progressively more complex passages, they may become aware of the need to view each sentence in terms of its context.

From the standpoint of the English teacher, the current emphasis on larger contexts is one of the most helpful aspects of present-day linguistics. Before the 1960s, linguists tended to focus attention on the sentence rather than on larger texts. Still, from the forties through the seventies, the work of linguists has been rich in implications for a whole generation of teachers. The teacher of literature has much to gain from an objective study of language. If human experience is the What of literature, surely language is part of the How.

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Tamil Nadu Agricultural University

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES
ENGLISH SECTION

A Report

Prof. R. SUDARSANAM

The English Section in the Department of Languages, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University has been functioning since June, 1972. It may be worthwhile to know what has been the contribution of the English Section to the students of agriculture, the farmers of Tamil Nadu and society in general, and how it has identified itself with the agricultural University concept of service through integrated 1. teaching, 2. research and 3. extension education.

I. Teaching by Objectives

In respect of teaching, the Department of languages offers four (Trimester) courses in 'English' and one course in 'Communication' carrying a total of 14 credits. The uniqueness of those courses is that the syllabi have been drawn in terms of specific linguistic objectives—skills and abilities required for receiving knowledge through the medium of English, and for communicating knowledge in the medium of English and Tamil. A study of the courses in English would reveal A) the curricular objectives of the courses. B) the functional approach to teaching English as a language of communication and c) the methodological innovations made to serve the needs of the students individually and collectively. The following courses are offered :

(i) Eng: 101 'A Review of English Grammar and Usage' (2 + 1 credits)

(ii) Eng: 102 'A Course in Reading and Listening' (2 + 1)

(iii) Eng: 103 'A Course in Productive English' (1 + 1)

(iv) Eng: 601 'A Course in Thesis writing and popular writing' (2+ 1) (Offered for Post-graduate students)

(v) Ag. Extn. 403: A Course in Ag. Extn. communication (2 + 1 offered in collaboration with Agrl. Extension Education Department)

A. English for Science and Technology

Another distinction of our courses in teaching is that English is taught for Science and Technology What is done generally in Universities is to prescribe 20th Century literary, cultural and science essays and compositions which have no direct bearing on the needs of science, scientific thinking, attitudes and creativity. The language of science (the scientific register of English), like the 'language of courts', is unique in respect of sentential forms and usages; it is this technical English in which the science students have to develop basic competencies if they should profit from class-room instruction in English, library reading of technical books, and from seminars. So the materials offered in the three courses are in the scientific register of English. Further, i) The first course deals in themes which may foreground important scientific abilities of great scientists. ii) the second course deals in logical and analogical forms of thinking and scientific processes and iii) the third course highlights important socio-scientific products-attitudes, values and scientific perspectives at the national and international levels. Thus. English is taught as a language of science and a language of thought, and not as a general 'subject'.

B. English as a Medium of Communication

The hall-mark of the courses in English is the incorporation of the principles of Linguistic Science in teaching English as a language of communication. What is taught conventionally is 'composition' and not 'communication'. So the students of colleges are not trained in selecting information, and organising

them rightly in relation to i) the particular needs of the given communicatees (like the lay public, educated audience or the scientists), ii) the purpose of communication (like 'to inform, to instruct or to persuade') and iii) the forms of communication (like writing reports, bulletins. popular articles, etc. and oral participation in seminars' group discussion, conversation, intra-communication, etc.) This much-wanted and much-neglected training in 'communication' is offered to the students by integrating systematically psycho-linguistic and socio-linguistic principles of communication in our courses in English.

C. *Courses in Programmed Instruction*

A distinct feature of the courses in English offered in the Department is its multi-disciplinary approach to solving the probems of learning which our students from widely varying socio-economic-educational strata face. By means of a few diagnostic tests on a) English Grammar, b) Vocabulary. c) Reading and Listening and d) Discoursal logic and Cohesion. the language competencies of the students at entry-point have been identified, and courses and exercises have been framed on the principles of a) Psychology of Cognitive Learning and b) Educational Programming so that the students may move through the steps of unit-lessons doing some exercises individually and some others in groups, and carrying out the exercises not mechanically but by using their mental faculties. As a result of these strategies, the performance at the end-point is almost uniform, and the students learn to correct the most frequently committed errors, and edit first drafts of writings in relation to communication needs.

D. *Built-In Learning-teaching Methodology*

Very often, educational innovations fail because no provision is made to carry along the teachers trained in conventional systems with the needs of the innovations. In order to overcome this difficulty, methodology of teaching the materials and 'key' to exercises have been built into the courses. As a result of this, the materials may be used for 'autolearning' purposes also. Ample provision has been made in form and variety of exercises so that the teacher may combine the exercises and vary the pace of teach-

ing according to class-room exigencies and create desirable motivation and orientation for class-room interaction in the medium of English.

2. Project-based Research

The Department has undertaken about 10 need based research projects since 1972. and has broken new grounds in respect of curricular and methodological innovations in teaching English and in respect of treat ent of message for successful communication. The projects may be grouped under these heads, viz., (A) Educational Technology, B) Literature and Translation C) Applied Linguistics and D) Teaching Applied Linguistics and Communication.

A. Curriculum Construction

Two projects, 'Diagnostic studies of the errors of the students and A study of Technical words", were undertaken; on the basis of the findings, our curriculum and methodology of teaching have been restructured. Another project entitled, "A systems approach to Teaching" was undertaken and the problems of library reading orientation, skimmed reading, reading different varieties of science materials, etc. were also studied; the findings have been used for developing a suitable methodology of teaching 'reading' and 'self-learning', and for integrating them with the teaching materials. A project, "To study the incremental competency of students in handling English from year to year during their study in the Agricultural College and the effects of backwash from other classes," has been recently undertaken.

B. Translation of Literary Works

A basic cultural and literary research study in Tamil entitled 'Thirukkuralil Velaanmai" carried out by Thiru L.S. Kandaswamy, Asst. Professor of Tamil and published by our University has been translated into English, under another research project by Thiru R. Sudarsanam, Associate Professor of English and Head of Department of Languages, so that the findings of the research project in Tamil may reach wider and foreign audiences. Genera-

tive principles of languages have been used for the translation-possibility, for studying 'ThirukKural' as a model of educationa; programming, for better and more upto-date translation of the couplets into English and for interpreting Saint Thiruvalluvar's idea of 'God' have been identified.

C. *Psycho-linguistic studies for Teaching Materials*

Research projects on Applied Linguistics have also been undertaken. In order to select teaching materials suitable for our curricular needs, a research project entitled, "A psycho-linguistic analysis of successful communication materials of scientists in English for the purpose of selecting successful models of communication and teaching materials" was undertaken. On the basis of this study, three text-books, "English for Technical Students–Books 1 2 and 3 have been prepared and published, incorporating all the aforesaid curricular and pedagogical innovations. These books have been revised on the basis of earlier feed backs, and are used in the Coimbatore campus of the University successfully. The comprehension rate which is 70 words/minute at entry point (I Trimester) has been found to improve to about 300 words/minute at the end of the II course. The performance of our students in English at end point (at the end of III course) has been found to be 37% higher than that of matched students in regular colleges.